Meg Villars of Paris and London Tells of New York Eye Openers

Paris Correspondent of the London Tatler and the London Town Topics, Now in New York, Writes of Her Sea Trip and Her First Impressions for the Evening World.

By Meg Villars.

HERE I am, in New York at last! I've always wanted to come to the States, ever since I was a flapperish schoolgirl, crazy over Charles Dana Gibson's square-jawed men and disdainful sirens, ever since I chewed my first peppermint molasses candy (I don't quite know the right name, but that's how they call them at Fuller's "American" candy store in London); ever since I first encased my "number fives" in American-built shoes, ever since I read my first American magazine story, ever since I wept over Little Lord Fauntleroy's sweet American mother in my nursery days, and that seems ages ago, even though I don't yet have to count my gray hairs!

When you have wanted anything for a long time it often falls flat when at last you get it, but if I can help it this first voyage of mine isn't going to, no, sir; not it!

So far I've had any amount of fun by trying to pretend that I'm an American; the fun lies in the fact that nobody will believe me, although I've learned no end of nice expressions, such as "Well, isn't that fierce?" and "Getting the ha-ha!" and "Falling off the water wagon!" The trouble seems to be that I use them in the wrong places—and the people laugh at me. Not that I mind. Laughter makes strangers friendly.

The trip across the herring pond was great, although we had an unusually cheap lot on board. The women were all ready-made skirts, knitted sweaters and large feet. It was wonderful to see how well they handled those feet, too, on slippery days!

The men were all nose (not a "w" amongst them) and pleated shirt fronts! If there's a thing that is criminal above all, it's the wearing of a soft pleated shirt with a dinner jacket! They all did it, the wretches, and the fanciest of fancy buttons on their black waistcoats! There were only four or five nice Americans in the whole crowd, but those were dears, beautifully tailored and groomed and altogether rich looking. I'm sure they must be the millionary sort of Americans who own skyscrapers and have luxurious offices on the top floor, with a view over the Hudson.

There were two rather nice Englishmen—an "orfficer" in the King's Armee and some little dukelet or other; they were very "well-cut tweedish," you know, but a little too bricky coloured (their hair was unfortunately red) and blue-eyed; in fact, they were too conspicuously English altogether. I hate any one to have all the caricatural characteristics of their race! They were very pleased with themselves and proud of their British endurance * * * they showed that endurance by never wearing overcoats; they went about in their well-cut tweeds by snow, hail, storm, and fog, hands in their pockets and lips jauntily pursed for whistling; unfortunately their faces were blue with cold, and you have no idea what a perfectly hideous coloured skin comes of a bricky complexion turning blue!

One of the ladies on board amused me quite lots * * * she was very short, built with a long body on dachshund legs. The long body was laced into an equally long corset, and as the lady was rather plumpish you could see where the corset began and ended * * * there were ridges that sort of wobbled! I used to watch those wobblings with a fascinated glare every time she walked—or rather staggered, for one couldn't really walk, it was too rough—up and down the deck; it made her very angry with me, but I couldn't help it.

I did so long to go and tell her to let out the laces a little bit at the top and at the bottom to give the ridges fair play * * * but, of course, it would have been rather daring, and I hadn't the nerve.

I wonder why it is that fat women won't understand that the more they squeeze the more they accentuate their embonpoint (I love that word—it's so hypocritically polite!) Fat must go somewhere if you've got a lot on you; if you squeeze it in one place it only roll out in another! From the fat lady my mind wanders to the little thin lady. She was a wiry, bird-eyed soul, with a tendency to gush * * * for instance, when she would say "Good night" to a deck acquaintance she would put her hand into his and pour herself into his eyes, saying, "Dear, dear Capt. Jones, how can I ever, ever thank you for your kindness!" Onlookers would think that the noble captain had no doubt jumped overboard during the day to save the lady's toy Pom from the briny deep, but those who knew would point out that the little lady had merely used the captain's arm to cling to when making a tour of inspection to find out the driest, coziest, darkest corner of the very wet, uncomfy and slippery deck.

I didn't take long to get my sea-legs in spite of the puffectly awful weather. I was in my cabin the first day, but the second saw me up on deck and doing the scenic railway stunt on my own! I hadn't a Captain Jones, or any other kind of Chili pickle, to help me promenade. It was funny, the way we went switchbacking along. First of all you found yourself climbing up a steep wall, then suddenly the ship would dip, and you'd find that you were madly running or slithering along to a watery grave, unless you could manage to hang on to a railing or somebody's feet sticking over the edge of a deck chair!

I didn't actually see the Statue of Liberty as we sailed into the bay the morning of our arrival—two days late. The mist was too thick, but I can't put that down as a disappointment because I've seen so many picture post-cards of it that I know just exactly how it looks.

The ships in the harbor were all out of their bearings on account of the fog, and one huge monster grated across our nose. * * * Just two yards nearer, and there would have been a wonderful mixup! As it was the swearing I heard was more than mixed, and the blue language mingling with the yellow fog caused an atmospheric disturbance that almost knocked us flat on the deck!

I dare say exciting little things like that happen as a matter of course over here, for next day none of the papers commented about it. It's true that even dare-all American reporters don't go swimming about in the river foggy winter mornings on the off chance of seeing the traffic behave badly and making copy out of it, do they? I enjoyed the landing and all the bustle it entailed. The customs inspectors are delightful to strangers. "As a visitor, my dear," one of them said to me in paternal tones (I was inquiring aloud for my fur coat), "you are entitled to everything you can wear" Then he turned to an American lady who had evidently been shopping extensively in Paris, and she had to go off with him and swear to the correct pedigree of her sealskin coat! That was the only time I realized the blessings of being a stranger to the country.

I went to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, of course, for the fame of this huge caravansery has spread all over Europe. Although I was prepared to be startled, its immensity took my breath away, the crowd downstairs—I'm going to investigate that peacock alley as soon as I get my best bib and tucker unpacked—the possibility of getting everything you want from a packet of hairpins to a fountain pen (I love the lady who sells them, she called me "honey" just when I was feeling lonely and it bucked me up no end). The great elevators that whiz you up to the 'teenth floor before you can say "Jack Robinson," it's all great!

I may sound stupid, and I probably am, for it took me an hour's hard work to tumble into the right way of giving an order when I finally reached my room.

Woman-like I neglected the obvious and didn't read the notice hanging over the telephone telling you to communicate with the floor clerk if you want anything. It was that carelessness that got me into trouble.

In Paris, at any hotel, you ring for the maid and she runs the circus. I tried to do that here and took a wrong turning. To begin with the page—a grown up one not a bit like the twelve-year-old ones at home—arrived in answer to my ring; he looked a bit surprised when I asked for the maid, but promised to send her along.

In came the house maid. "If you please, said I, I'd like these things laundried." The answer came pat: "Certainly, m'am, the laundry maid will attend to that!" and she disappeared.

Two minutes later a fair-haired, dainty little girl in a muslin apron appeared and took charge of my washing. As she was going I remembered I wanted a shirt waist dry-cleaned. "The valet sees to the cleaning," was the remark she made with a twinkle in her eye.

Then it was that I began to feel foolish. The valet, after taking my blouses, passed me on to the shoe valet about my shoes, that one gave me over to the bath maid because I complained of a leak in the bathroom, and finally the bath maid confided me to the tender mercies of the waiter when, exhausted, I begged for a restoring cup of tea. The waiter was a sympathetic Frenchman—I hope he hasn't been knocked over the head in the strike—and we parley-vooed explanations with volubility. Now, of course, I am perfectly happy. I know that when I am in trouble I can fly to the phone and my dandy, nice floor clerk will be sweet to me. She'll tell me everything I want to know from where to buy shirt waists or how many stamps to put on a letter to Europe, how to get downtown or out to Riverside Drive, which is the most delightful place I have yet seen in New York. I took the dime omnibus on Fifth avenue and its fine, but being of a curious frame of mind, I want to know what happens to a man if he's off the water wagon and can't see straight to put the coin in the slot.

I think I'd better leave it at that, for I feel that I shan't be able to make good in Americanese more than that to-day. The strain would tell; I might get meningitis!

The New York Fighting Woman and Her London Sister—Contrasting Methods in a Remarkable Week of Warfare

New York Women of Wealth and Social Position Arrested This Week and Dragged to the Night Court Tell Why They Aid the Striking Garment Workers—"We Endure Hardships and Run Risks BECAUSE WE'RE WOMEN," They Declare—"Do Our Laws Stand for Justice or Money?" Asks Miss Freeman.

"It's War to the Knife!" Cries "General" Mrs. Drummond as She and Her 21 Followers Are Arrested for Raiding England's House of Commons—Dundee Suffragettes Break Up an Asquith Meeting and Dublin Women Smash Windows in Custom House—"We Will Create an Impossible Situation," Says Mrs. Pankhurst.

Marguerite Mooers Marshall.

THE most remarkable week of woman's achievement in the English-speaking world is just closing. On both sides of the Atlantic, in London and New York, woman has been fighting woman's battle. Victory has not yet perched on either banner, but that is a matter of comparative unimportance, a detail which time is bound to settle satisfactorily. The great note, the supreme proof of the strength of the feminist movement, is simply that women would seem at last to have learned their most-needed lesson—"United we stand, divided we fall." Rich and poor, old and young, sheltered women and working women, are pressing forward, shoulder to shoulder, a united host.

Their immediate battle, in New York, has to do with industrial conditions. In England the suffragists, disappointed by the throwing out of their parliamentary bill, are concentrating their forces on the most militant campaign for the vote yet devised. But let's see first what the New York women are doing.

Working from six to ten hours a day, tramping through sleet and rain and cold, enduring insult, physical mishandling, arrest, gun-shment, and all this for a cause the victory of which will bring them absolutely nothing in the why of personal gain—here is the record made by New York women of wealth, culture and social position during the past week. With splendid whole-hearted enthusiasm they have entered the ranks of the striking garment and white goods workers, and served side by side with them as "peaceful pickets" for the factories where strike-breakers are being employed. And scarcely a night has gone by without its quota of gallant volunteers being dragged like the lowest criminals into the Night Court.

Why are these women forcing themselves into this situation, when no possible personal advantage can accrue to them from the most favorable settlement of the strike? Why are they courting not merely discomfort but downright danger—and all for no personal grievance? I put the question, "why?" to a number of them. And the explanations I received were as illuminating as they were sincere and comprehensive.

In a sentence, every answer may be summed up as follows: "We are doing this work, running these risks, enduring these hardships—BECAUSE WE ARE WOMEN!"

Mrs. Marguerite Remington Charter was one of the first women with whom I talked. Mrs. Charter is the wife of a well-to-do business man, and her social position is unquestioned. Yet she was one of the first volunteer pickets, and for two weeks she has averaged at least six hours a day picketing night and morning. Two nights ago she was arrested and arraigned before Magistrate Herbert in the Night Court.

"I think every woman in New York should come into this thing," she urged. "It doesn't matter whether she is a suffragist or an anti-suffragist. Before all else she is a woman, and she is needed to do her part in retrieving the wrongs done to women.

"It happens that I am a firm believer in suffrage, but I should have volunteered for this work just the same, in my case. Women of a certain position, and who can command protection if they require it, are needed among the pickets because of the absolutely prejudiced attitude of the police. The members of the force whom I have observed seem to have the strikers ready condemned beforehand. They arrest the girls when the latter are not breaking any law, apparently relying on the fright and ignorance of their prisoners.

"Like the other women pickets who are not themselves strikers, I have worn the plainest, most unobtrusive clothes on picket duty, trying not to differentiate myself in any way from the working women. The girls, of course, know who I am; the policemen do not. In this way I am able to be an informed and impartial witness of what goes on, and my testimony cannot be dismissed as that of an 'ignorant foreigner.'

"The pickets have frequently been accused of not being peaceful. In all my experience I have seen only one instance of unwarranted violence on the part of a picket. One girl did give a scab a slight blow. Just before that one of the manufacturer's thugs had purposely run against the offending picket's companion, knocking her into the mud and breaking her glasses. Can you wonder that such provocation offered to a hungry girl provoked retaliation?

"One of the things we older women who are not strikers try to do is to help maintain the self-control of the girls. A bit of reasoning convinces them so easily that they only hurt their own cause by violence. They are wonderful little persons, in my opinion, so mature and sensible at sixteen and seventeen. But they do appreciate the moral support and encouragement of disinterested outsiders who will report with them at their posts of duty. Besides helping their self-restraint, this support makes them feel less alone and desperate. It's awful for a young girl to feel that all the world is arrayed against her.

"Then, of course, I believe emphatically in the justice of the strike, and want to do all I can to secure every one of the concessions asked for. Think of men compelling girls to take wages of $3.50 and $4 a week, and not even steady work all the year round at this ridiculous stipend! And think of asking children who ought to be in high school to work from 8 to 6, with only half an hour for luncheon! How can any woman read of such things and not throw all her influence on the side of the girls!

"Of course, too, we can reach some of the scabs and persuade them to join the union. But in my opinion the moral effect of the pickets is the great thing. When people see us walking up and down in front of a shop they know that the manufacturer is treating his employees unfairly. We are a living protest that can't be disregarded.

"Why was I arrested?" Mrs. Charter repeated, with a little laugh of deprecation. "Oh, simply because I called out, 'Girls, don't be strike breakers!' Yes, that remark was somehow an offense against the law. Have I picketed since. Of course!"

Then I went to see Miss Elizabeth Freeman, who, by the way, has taken her turn in London jails as a "militant." But she's a perectly good American, and far too busy helping strikers in New York to go back to London and help suffragettes.

"Yes, I've been picketing since the first of the strike," admitted Miss Freeman. "Nobody knew anything about it till last night, when I was arrested, because I thought I'd get the confidence of the girls better if they didn't think I was helping them for personal ends. They believe we like to be written up, you know. So I just kept quiet and did all I could.

"There's one reason why every woman who is a mother or who has a sister should pitch in and help the pickets. What is because the cadets and white slave procurers are doing their fine work—or trying to do it—around the factories where girls are on strike. They play the sympathetic and get into conversation with the pickets, pitying their hard luck, offering them car fares and dinners. The girls are naturally straight, but they're also hungry and miserable. They certainly need womanly protection.

"The other night I saw a number of these youths in conversation with two girl pickets in a doorway. I did my best to get to them, but in that case was ordered away by a policeman, which shows how much moral protection the girls may expect from the police. Not that one would look for any different attitude where strikers are concerned.

"Another reason why we women must all take part in this business is to see whether our laws stand for justice or for money—and, having seen, to act. Last night when Miss Leonora O'Reilly and I were arrested we had made all our plans to go down to the Island. Either we had broken the law or we hadn't. If we had, then we deserved punishment. Outraged justice ought not to be satisfied with a fine. Yet it was. The strikers' lawyer insisted on turning over the money, despite all our protests. If disinterested women can induce the Judge to bestow a few jail sentences on them, they will win the day for the striking girls.

"Oh, if it only can be settled soon!" exclaimed Miss Freeman, her voice suddenly breaking as her hands went up to cover her tear-filled gray eyes.

"I lay awake all last night thinking about the girls, thinking and thinking, trying to see some quick way out. They are so brave and so patient, but their hardships are so severe. If only that $5 that paid my fine could have gone to buy food for them! And in addition to all the necessary hardships of the strike, there are so many not necessary.

"The girls are arrested for absolutely nothing at all, just as I was arrested last night for calling out to the strike-breakers. 'Why aren't you women!' Some of the policemen, at least, have absolutely no conscience about lying in their charges against the pickets.

"These girls are our sisters, and it's our business as women to defend them. What I long to see is a tremendous public demonstration, in which every woman in the city of New York will take part. Let us all show our colors! Let us all be willing to share the fate of these women who are being persecuted. Every woman who has ever had an impulse to do anything for her sex should come out on our side!"

And with Miss Freeman's earnest declaration ringing in my ears, I sought Miss Mary Parsons, another young society woman who has been arrested for saying, 'Girls, please don't break the strike.' Miss Parsons had still another good reason for the co-operation of women of wealth and education with the striking garment and white goods workers.

"I can explain it best," she said, "by giving my own experience as a picket. I was walking up and down in front of a certain shop, calling out to the scabs as they came out. I had thoroughly posted myself on the law before beginning the work of picketing.

"A policeman came up and said sternly: 'You must not molest these girls.' I replied, 'I'm not molesting them.' On the next turn he approached me again and said, 'You must not interfere with these girls!' I replied, 'I'm not interfering.' When I came round the next time he marched up and exclaimed more fiercely than ever, 'You must not intimidate them!' And I answered, 'I'm not intimidating.' And then he tried to drive me away by telling an absolute lie. He said that there was an injunction against picketing that shop.

"The point is that the police try to break the spirit of the working girl pickets, who are not supposed to know much English or much law, by threatening them with long, strange words like 'intimidate' and 'molest,' and telling them absolute falsehoods in regard to their legal rights. Therefore there should be an educated American woman at every post to see that the pickets get their rights. If a girl is arrested or struck by a policeman, her spirit is roused. If she is continually threatened and scared, her spirit is broken.

"I think that the policemen themselves might be more just in their treatment if they had the support of an aroused public opinion—and women could arouse it. When I was being taken to the station house I said to my captor, 'You're striking a blow against your own people.' He said, 'I know it; I don't want to arrest the girls, but I got to do it. There's orders.'

Miss Violet Pike of the Woman's Trade Union League was enthusiastic about the good accomplished by the pickets in converting the strike-breakers—of course the immediate object of all picketing.

"The women who are helping the white goods workers have done fine service in winning over the scabs," she declared. "You see, this is the first strike for a lot of the girls, and while their intentions are the best, they lack self-confidence and experience. Left to themselves, they go obediently to the factory, but there they sometimes stand still and let the scabs go by, out of sheer ignorance of how to approach them.

"We older ones call out to the girls and explain to them just what they're doing. And we carry on loud conversations among ourselves about the privileges and duties of the union. And we won't let the policemen frighten us away, so long as we keep within the law. Ever so many of the strike-breakers have joined us.

"We also," Miss Pike added, rather sarcastically, "are able to explain to the new girls that while violence may be used against them, they must not retaliate. One girl burst into a meeting recently and exclaimed, 'My employer he hire de bums to fight us! Let us take up a collection and hire more of de bums to fight him!' We had to tell her it wouldn't do."

The connection between "bums," police and employers is also of particular interest to Mrs. Walter Weyl, wife of the well-known writer and social economist.

"My husband and I saw a thug hired by a manufacturer deliberately strike a picket who wasn't even opening her mouth," Mrs. Weyl told me. "We appealed to two policemen, and finally to the mounted lieutenant to arrest that man. 'I can't touch him,' was the invariable reply. Meanwhile they had arrested the utterly unoffending girl.

And now, how went the woman's battle this week in England? But Mrs. Pankhurst would say that it is a war which she is waging, a war to the death, because death is better than life without freedom. And the militant women behind her are conducting their warfare for the ballot with the same wonderful loyalty and sex solidarity observable among their New York sisters.

"It is now war to the knife," says 'General' Mrs. Drummond. "The magistrates and Mr. Lloyd-George have a lot of trouble ahead of them. They will have to do the dirty work and they will have plenty of it to do."

Mrs. Drummond then led a raid on the House of Commons, and she herself and her deputation of twenty-one women were arrested. In the scramble she was thrown to the ground and knocked about severely by the police. Brought into court, she and two companions were sentenced to fourteen days in prison for resisting the police. Released later, against her will, by an unknown person, the courageous woman declared, "Whoever paid the fine was no friend of mine, but I am going out to fight again."

Suffragettes broke up a meeting held in honor of Premier Asquith at Dundee, Scotland. The keys of the city were being conferred upon him, when the women rushed the place crying, "Traitor! Traitor!" In the attempt to throw them out of the hall there were many sharp scrimmages, and several leaders were seriously hurt.

Over in Dublin Mrs. Mabel Purser has just begun to serve a sentence of a month in prison, at hard labor, for breaking the Custom House windows.

"I want to give the lie to the statement made in the House of Commons that Irish women do not want the vote," she said, as she was being carried off to her cell.

Mike McGraw Runs Into the Devil on West Fifty-fifth Street.

SOMETHING was wrong with Michael McGraw. Voices were whispering to him, voices he didn't know. Strange songs were singing in his head. And Michael is no musician. He knows "Where the River Shannon flows," but couldn't whistle it if they were to give him the river and it flowing with mixed lager and ale. A horse coughed in his stall close by—did he cough or did he laugh? Michael is an ostler and used to horses, and this was in his own stable, No. 150 West Fifty-fifth street. But it gave him a start and he moved out to the front door.

It was last Wednesday afternoon when the weather was behaving like a man who has no mind of his own at all. Through a gray overcoat of fog the snow came down like a summer gown. Then the rain fell and made the street look like Monday's wash. But the street, with its high gates and low garages, its little studios and its big apartment houses, was quiet. The only people who passed McGraw were students in the Clinton Peters's Art School, which has three studios at No. 152, next door.

And Michael liked the quiet that day. For a week he had been hearing strange noises. He had been seeing strange sights at night. When he would go to lie down the bed would get up and when he got up the floor would go down. Funny little pink and green men would play tag on his bed and climb up the wall. One night one of his own horses climbed up on the footboard of the bed and laughed at him. And the next morning when he was hurrying over to John Tobin, the mixoculist on Fifty-sixth street, who prepares eye-openers, didn't a man jump right up out of a manhole and go straight up in the sky?

But it was quiet on Fifty-fifth street then. Occasionally a horse would go clipping and slapping along the wet pavement. But McGraw was used to horses. Once in awhile an automobile would go by with a swish like seltzer getting busy with a gin fizz. But Michael didn't mind automobiles. Hadn't he lived there many years and the street full of the black and red devils? And he had never been run over yet. So McGraw didn't think anything at all when a taxicab drove right up in front of the stable and stopped at his very door.

The door of the taxi opened and out stepped the devil!

Yes, sir. He was a big devil too. He had great flowing robes with circles and rings on them and great gold dragons and flowers. Mike thought the robes were blue and yellow and red, or they might have been pink and gray and green, or they might have been all of them together. And out of his head stuck a bunch of peacock feathers and underneath them Mike could see the horns. And the face of him! Oh, the FACE of him! It was yellow—yellower than the flags they float on Orangemen's Day and redder than the lights in the subway. And the awful eyelashes that drooped to the ears, twisted like blackthorns. The turned-up shoes—and he was walking right toward McGraw!

But Mike didn't wait for him.

"Glory be to God!" he cried, then beat it.

And the devil walked right on and into No. 152, next door. Sure he was no devil at all, only a play actor. ... was Schuyler Ladd playing Daffodil, the Chinsurper, in "The Yellow Jacket." He is having his picture painted by Percy W. Mundle, one of Mr. Peters's pupils. The show is somewhere over in Brooklyn, wherever that is, and the actor goes to the studio in his make-up.

Now wasn't that too bad about Mike?

Dowling or Downing?

The other day, when six members of the Curran committee investigating Police Department conditions were up at the Forty-seventh street station, the lieutenant on duty came out of the telephone booth and said Alderman Dowling was wanted on the wire.

"Did you say 'Dowling' or 'Downing'?" asked Downing. Dowling was not alone.

"I don't know," replied the lieutenant. 'It was one or the other—I guess it was 'Downing.' "

So Alderman Downing went to the booth. He was there but a moment, and came out with a disgusted look.

"He wanted Dowling," he said. 'Just another typographical error."